

October 30, 2003

TO: County Superintendents
Chairpersons, County Professional Development Boards

FROM: Cherylin J. Roeser, Chair
New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB)

SUBJECT: County Professional Development Boards
Update on Local Professional Development Plan Review Process

On behalf of the New Jersey Professional Teaching Standards Board (PTSB), I want to express appreciation for the outstanding job you have done over the past four years in reviewing, evaluating and approving the local professional development plans in your county. Your work in reading each plan and in measuring it against the Feedback Continuum has assisted districts in moving the quality of professional development in New Jersey to a higher level. It is that quality shift from “counting hours” to “making the hours count” that will create a change in our professional culture. We are grateful for your work in helping educators update their thinking and practices in the area of professional learning.

As year four of the professional development initiative for teachers begins, the PTSB asks that you reinforce the following key elements of quality professional development for the plan review. The focus for professional learning for New Jersey teachers should be:

Linked to student success - This means that educators should be concerned that the professional development they take is results driven. Instead of “counting hours”, how will educators “make the hours count” toward student learning?

Outcomes oriented - This means that follow up application of new knowledge must take place after the initial learning experience. Educators need to consider the goal of each professional development experience. They need to ask how will the new knowledge be implemented in their classrooms?

Embedded in daily structures - This means that professional learning experiences should be focused at the school level and linked to the teacher's primary

employment. Are planned activities and experiences connected to, not isolated from, daily teaching and learning?

Incorporated into every day classroom practice - This means that professional development is defined by “what matters,” not by “what counts.” As participants deepen subject matter knowledge, how will they make sure this deepened knowledge improves their practice?

In order to design and evaluate a district professional development plan that reflects this shift in quality, the PTSB also recommends the County Professional Development Board (CPDB) and Local Professional Development Committee (LPDC) members re-visit the key guidance documents of the initiative. This information can be accessed through the Department of Education website at www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev. The following key guidance documents are located on the professional development website:

A New Vision for Professional Development - This is an overview of the research, philosophy and foundation of the State’s professional development requirements.

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/newvision.pdf>

Power Point presentation for new LPDC and CPDB members - An overview of information to prepare new members.

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/slides/index.htm>

Implementation Guide to The Professional Development Initiative - Contains all of the “How-To’s” for developing a quality district plan.

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/guide/>

Please remember that all documents that are needed to develop and review local plans are located in Section 2 of The Implementation Guide to the Professional Development Initiative available on the DOE website. Please remember that the dates of the timelines are the only change in the overall planning process from last year. You may download the entire guide at: <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/guide/> or review only Section 2 on the professional development website at: <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/profdev/guide/03section2.pdf>.

Attached please find the following four updated planning tools to support you in your work:

- Planning Timelines For 2004-2005 Implementation;
- Implementation Activity Guide (Updated Fall 2003);
- Federal No Child Left Behind Professional Development Guidance; and
- Framework for Developing the Local Professional Development Plan (Updated Fall 2003).

In closing, many members of the county boards and local committees have accepted the invitation to attend one of our monthly business meetings and share feedback regarding progress of the initiative. As many of you noted in your reports to the PTSB, you are seeing a marked

improvement in the quality of the professional learning opportunities offered to educators and positive changes in attitudes toward professional learning are taking place at all levels. We are continuing to solicit input on the initiative and hope that you will feel free to continue to come to us and offer your suggestions for improvement.

Again, I thank you for your outstanding work and want to encourage you to continue to influence the shift toward higher quality professional learning.

Questions regarding any of the professional development documentation should be directed to Patricia Guazzelli, professional development coordinator with the Office of Academic and Professional Standards at (609) 633-3965 or via email at pat.guazzelli@doe.state.nj.us.

CR

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